

VZCZCXRO0258  
PP RUEHDT RUEHPB  
DE RUEHKO #1051/01 1080425

ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 170425Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3510  
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 7319  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 9697  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0990  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 7913  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/USFJ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 TOKYO 001051

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2018/04/15

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF JAPAN GROUPS AND THEIR  
POLITICAL IMPACT

REF: TOKYO 781

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Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, reasons 1.4(b),(d).

Summary and Comment

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¶1. (C) The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Japan's largest opposition party and controller of the Diet's Upper House, until recently had only one party grouping that was considered effective and influential: DPJ head Ichiro Ozawa's inner circle. Over the past several months, however, other DPJ groups, notably those opposed to Ozawa, have become more united and active. With the DPJ presidential election scheduled to be held in September 2008, and the possibility of broad political realignment in the offing, how the DPJ's groups maneuver and interact will have a significant impact on Japan's political future.

¶2. (C) If the DPJ presidential election were held today, Embassy Tokyo's contacts believe that Ozawa, the DPJ's Diet election mastermind, would probably be reelected. However, Ozawa's stock is going down. Recent missteps have led to increasing friction with both the party's leadership and rank-and-file. In addition, his personal approval rating is lower than PM Fukuda's and his disapproval rating is higher. The DPJ's support rate has dropped due to its handling of the Bank of Japan (BOJ) Governor issue. As the DPJ considers who can best lead the party to victory in the next general election -- the timing of which remains unknown -- there will be intense jockeying for position within and among the party's various groups. This cable describes these groups and their leaders, policy focus, and membership. It also highlights how these groups differ from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) factions. End Summary and Comment.

How DPJ Groups Differ from LDP Factions

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¶3. (C) DPJ groups and the LDP factions differ greatly in purpose and orientation. The LDP factions' power has traditionally been based on the ability to provide financial support and secure Cabinet and party posts for faction members, thereby guaranteeing factional loyalty. Although the "money game" is less important following changes in Japan's electoral system and in the Political Funding Control Law, LDP factions still support their members financially and

continue to use their influence whenever possible to secure appointments in the government and party.

¶4. (C) DPJ groups, on the other hand, are more focused on policy and lack the enticement of money or posts. These groups are centered around six DPJ leaders and the two former political parties that united to form the DPJ. The leaders are:

-- President Ozawa  
-- Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama  
-- Acting President Naoto Kan  
-- Vice President Seiji Maehara  
-- Vice President Katsuya Okada and  
-- Rep. Yoshihiko Noda.

The two former parties are:

-- the Socialist Party (SP) and  
-- the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP).

Roughly divided by ideological orientation, the Ozawa, Hatoyama, Maehara, Noda, and former DSP groups are all "conservative," i.e., they support the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and, in general, free market economics and competition. The Kan and former SP groups are "liberal/progressive," i.e., supportive, but more critical, of the U.S.-Japan Alliance, with a focus on social welfare and equality. The Okada support group is a grab bag of different ideologies. Diet members affiliate themselves with particular groups based on their policy ideas, personal connections and individual beliefs. Additionally, some DPJ Diet members belong to multiple groups and refrain from clarifying their policy positions.

The Ozawa Group

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¶5. (C) Ichiro Ozawa's group consists of former Liberal Party members and so-called "Isshinkai" (Group of the Newly Elected) members, a group of young, pro-Ozawa DPJ politicians. Senior members of the group, such as Hiroshi Nakai and Kenji Yamaoka, are known for ultra-nationalistic views that track closely with the right wing of the LDP. Members of the DPJ's "Tanfu Mondai to Nanking Jiken no Shinjitsu wo Kenshousuru Kai" (Group to Study the Comfort Women Issue and the Truth about the Nanking Incident) are also well represented in the Ozawa group, as are some members of the "Minna de Yasukuni Jinja ni Sanpaisuru Kokkaigin no Kai" (Diet Group to Visit the Yasukuni Shrine). Embassy media contacts say that only 30 or so of the roughly 50 Ozawa group members are actively involved. The rest belong to other groups and could easily change their position depending on fluctuating political circumstances. (See para 17 for a list of confirmed members.)

The Hatoyama Group

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¶6. (C) Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama heads the "Seiken Koutai wo Jitsugensuru Kai" (Group to Realize a Change in Government). The 23 members meet every Thursday over lunch in Hatoyama's private office. Dubbed the "Salon Hatoyama," the group is considered by some to be a gathering of "rich kids" who share Hatoyama's wealthy family background and multi-generational political pedigree. Although Hatoyama is a self-described liberal, his policy views tend to be conservative. For example, he strongly advocates revising the Constitution to increase Japan's responsibility for its own security, maintains a tough stance against the DPRK (particularly over the abduction issue), and once argued for arming Japan with nuclear weapons. After Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and Ozawa failed to create a grand coalition in November 2007, the Hatoyama group distanced itself from the

Ozawa group and approached the Maehara and Noda groups (see below), which are known to be anti-Ozawa, Asahi Shimbun senior staff writer Hiroshi Hoshi told Embassy Tokyo. (See para 18 for a list of confirmed members.)

#### The Kan Group

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¶17. (C) Acting DPJ President Naoto Kan heads the "Kuni no Katachi Kenkyuu Kai" (Shape of the Nation Study Group). Its 25 members meet every Thursday. Like the Hatoyama group, the Kan group distanced itself from Ozawa after the failed grand coalition attempt and is positioned somewhere between the Ozawa group and anti-Ozawa groups, according to Asahi's Hoshi. Kan formerly was a patent attorney engaged in civic movements and consumer advocacy. His main policy focus is the abolition of collusive relationships among politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. The "Kuni no Katachi Kenkyuu Kai" group stresses the importance of political activities at the grassroots level to reflect the needs of the general public. Kan rose to prominence in the mid-90's while serving as the LDP's Minister of Health and Welfare. While heading the Ministry, Kan admitted the Ministry was at fault in an HIV-tainted blood scandal and settled a long-standing lawsuit brought by the victims. (See para 19 for a list of confirmed members.)

#### The Maehara & Noda Groups

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¶18. (C) The group led by former DPJ President and current Vice President Seiji Maehara is officially known as "Ryoun-kai" (Group of the High-Spirited). Former Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Yoshihiko Noda's group is called "Shishi no kai" (Group of People of Vision). The groups' members number around 25 and eight respectively. Maehara and Noda are both graduates of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management, a private graduate school dedicated to producing future politicians and businessmen, and they share similar conservative policy beliefs. DPJ liberals refer to them as "policy fundamentalists," criticizing their policy ideas as "too conservative." Because the two men support each other and mostly act in concert, political observers often refer to their followers as the "Maehara-Noda group." Because Maehara has already served as DPJ party president, and was forced to

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step down under a cloud, he will likely step aside for Noda and work to make him the party's future leader, Nikkei Shimbun political reporter Shunsuke Oba explained to Embassy Tokyo. (See paras 20 and 21 for a list of confirmed members.)

¶19. (C) The Maehara-Noda group members believe that Ozawa's political style, reminiscent of old-school LDP politics, is too reliant on courting interest groups' votes and negotiating behind closed doors, according to a media contact close to both groups. They believe this makes the DPJ too much like the LDP and threatens the party's existence. Significantly, these groups' influence within the party and on Ozawa appears to be growing. For example, during the recent Bank of Japan (BOJ) Governor selection process, although Ozawa initially signaled his willingness to support former Ministry of Finance (MOF) Vice Minister Toshiro Muto as the new BOJ Governor, the Maehara and Noda groups strongly opposed Muto because they believed his MOF background would impede his ability to separate fiscal and monetary policy-making. Ozawa eventually came around to their way of thinking and opposed Muto and the other MOF candidates. Ozawa's switch to a tough stance was a signal to anti-Ozawa groups of his willingness to work with them, Embassy Tokyo contacts report.

#### The Okada Group

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¶10. (C) Former DPJ president Katsuya Okada has no formal

group of his own, but a solid number of DPJ members and potential Lower House election candidates would support him to replace Ozawa in the September DPJ presidential race should he decide to run. The Maehara and Noda groups firmly back Okada, Jiji Press chief political commentator Shiro Tasaki told Embassy Tokyo. Okada does not share the policy orientation of Maehara and Noda, but he is known as a security policy realist and is more skilled than Ozawa at consolidating party members' opinions.

¶11. (C) Okada's informal support group includes those politicians who lost their seats in the 2005 Lower House election and are preparing for the next one. As DPJ president in 2005, Okada took responsibility for the loss and resigned. He continues to shoulder the burden of their defeat, visiting each losing candidate's district to support their continuing campaign activities. DPJ Lower House member Akihisa Nagashima, a Maehara group member, told Embassy Tokyo that he believed many DPJ party members believe that Okada is "sincere" and that he is gaining respect within the party. Nagashima added that Okada's activities are "part of his strategy to return to power."

The Former Socialist Party Group

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¶12. (C) The former Socialist Party (or Yokomichi) group is small, with around 18 members, but it retains its influence within the party by enjoying a mutually supportive relationship with Ozawa. Its leader, Takahiro Yokomichi, agreed with Ozawa in 2004 that a "UN Stand-by Force," a separate unit from the Self Defense Forces, should be established for peace-keeping operations (PKO) under UN authority. The concept would allow Japan's active participation in PKO but would not require revision of Article 9 of the Constitution. According to Nikkei's Oba, Yokomichi wanted to use the agreement to counter pro-Constitutional revision groups, including those of Hatoyama, Maehara and Noda. For Ozawa's part, he sought to strengthen his relationship with the former Socialists in order to gain election cooperation from their labor union supporters. In the 2007 Upper House election, Ozawa took full advantage of the labor vote, successfully orchestrating the DPJ's landslide victory. (See para 22 for a list of confirmed members.)

The Former Democratic Socialist Party Group

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¶13. (C) The former Democratic Socialist Party's (DSP) 22 members are led by DPJ Vice President Tatsuo Kawabata, who enjoys a long-standing relationship with labor unions, mainly the Confederation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions, the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Workers'

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Unions, and the Federation of Textile, Chemical, Food, Commercial, Service and General Workers' Unions. Despite close ties to these unions, former DSP members share the conservative views of the Ozawa and Hatoyama groups. Ozawa works closely with the former DSP group for the same reason he remains close to the Socialist group: to take advantage of the labor vote for the next election, Oba told us. (See para 23 for a list of confirmed members.)

Political Implications

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¶14. (C) Although no one within the DPJ questions Ozawa's ability to engineer successful election campaigns (as he did the DPJ's Upper House victory in July 2007), party distrust of him has deepened following a number of missteps. His aborted attempt to form a grand coalition in November 2007, as well as his absence from a highly symbolic vote against the new anti-terror special measures bill in January, have weakened Ozawa's hold on the party. Furthermore, a number of

DPJ Diet members remain concerned that Ozawa may still harbor grand coalition intentions. This concern, combined with frictions between Ozawa and others in the party, have turned some DPJ groups against him, Embassy Tokyo political and media contacts note. As the BOJ governor issue demonstrates, these groups are coalescing and increasingly impacting the party's policy decisions.

¶15. (C) Should Ozawa's actions continue to negatively impact the DPJ's support rate, anti-Ozawa groups will intensify their maneuverings to jettison him and elect Okada as the next party president, Embassy contacts believe. To strengthen his base, Ozawa has established a new intra-party parliamentary league of Diet members who once served as local assembly members and as heads of municipalities. The groups within the DPJ that continue to support Ozawa include his own group and the former SP and DSP groups, or about 71 politicians. The "anti-Ozawa coalition" includes the Hatoyama, Kan, Maehara, and Noda groups and numbers around 80 politicians. Roughly 80 politicians, or one-third of the DPJ's 223 total Diet members, remain on the fence.

¶16. (C) In addition to jockeying for position within the DPJ, increased cross-party interactions, attempts at party poaching and the formation of supra-partisan groups are leading to speculation about a possible political realignment (reftel). For example, the media reported in late February that senior DPJ politicians Maehara and Yoshito Sengoku had planned to attend a dinner meeting with former PM and LDP Diet member Junichiro Koizumi and former LDP Secretary general Taku Yamasaki (the meeting was canceled at the last minute). Additionally, LDP Headquarters Director General Hitoshi Motojuku told Embassy Tokyo that the party is attempting to entice the former DSP group to form its own party after the next Lower House election and join the LDP-Komeito coalition. The DPJ's Nagashima further disclosed to us that Ozawa, eyeing possible political realignment, has approached LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Sadakazu Tanigaki and his faction members about a possible tie-up. In the midst of these political maneuverings, how DPJ groups continue to interact and align themselves will greatly influence Japan's political future.

#### DPJ Presidential Election Mechanics

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¶17. (SBU) Before a DPJ election for party head is held, a candidate for party president must submit a petition signed by 20 or more Diet members. Once candidates have been selected, the election takes place in three stages. First, the 300 local DPJ chapters each hold an election, and the candidates receive one point for each chapter won. Subsequently, DPJ local assembly members nationwide hold an election with 100 points at stake. Based on the outcome of this vote, the candidates proportionally divide up the 100 points. Finally, the (current) 223 DPJ Diet members cast their votes, worth two points each, for a total of 446 points. The points from all three of these stages are totaled up, and the candidate with the most points becomes the DPJ's president. In the September 2006 DPJ presidential election, only Ozawa threw his hat in the ring and no election was held.

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¶18. (C) Members of the Ozawa Group (44 confirmed members)

Lower House (31)

Aisaka, Seiji (1st term)  
Fujii, Hirohisa (6)  
Ishikawa, Tomohiro (1)  
Ishizeki, Takashi (1)  
Jinpu, Hideo (2)  
Kikawada, Toru (3)  
Kikuta, Makiko (2)

Kira, Shuji (2)  
Komiyama, Ysuko (2)  
Maeda, Yukichi (3)  
Matsuki, Kenko (2)  
Mitani, Mitsuo (1)  
Murai, Muneaki (2)  
Nagayasu, Takashi (2)  
Nakai, Hiroshi (10)  
Nakano, Hiroko (2)  
Okumura, Tenzo (2)  
Ozawa, Ichiro (13)  
Ryu, Hirofumi (2)  
Shinohara, Takashi (2)  
Sonoda, Yasuhiro (2)  
Suzuki, Katsumasa (2)  
Tajima, Kaname (2)  
Tanabu, Masayo (2)  
Uchiyama, Akira (2)  
Washio, Eiichiro (1)  
Yamada, Masahiko (4)  
Yamaguchi, Tsuyoshi (1)  
Yamaoka, Kenji (4)  
Yokoyama, Hokuto (1)  
Yoshida, Izumi (2)

Upper House (13)

Aoki, Ai (1)  
Funayama, Yasue (1)  
Hirano, Ttsuo (2)  
Ichikawa, Yasuo (1)  
Ishii, Hajime (1)  
Kawakami, Yoshihiro (1)  
Koda, Kuniko (1)  
Kudo, Kentaro (1)  
Mori, Yuko (2)  
Muroi, Kunihiko (1)  
Nishioka, Takeo (2)  
Tanabu, Masami (2)  
Uematsu, Emiko (1)

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¶19. (C) Members of the Hatoyama Group (23 confirmed members)

Lower House (14)

Fujimura, Osamu (5)  
Hatoyama, Yukio (7)  
Hirano, Hirofumi (4)  
Kawauchi, Hiroshi (4)  
Koga, Issei (6)  
Kondo, Yosuke (2)  
Maki, Yoshio (3)  
Matsubara, Jin (3)  
Matsuno, Yorihisa (3)  
Mitsui, Wakio (3)  
Morimoto, Tetsuo (1)  
Ohata, Akihiro (6)  
Oshima, Atsushi (3)  
Ozawa, Sakihito (5)

Upper House (9)

Fujita, Yukihisa (1)  
Hironaka, Wakako (4)  
Iwamoto, Tsukasa (2)  
Kobayashi, Masao (1)  
Odachi, Motoyuki (1)  
Oishi, Masamitsu (1)  
Shiba, Hirokazu (1)  
Shimada, Chiyako (1)  
Yanase, Susumu (2)

¶20. (C) Members of the Kan Group (24 members)

Lower House (15)

Doi, Ryuichi (6)  
Hiraoka, Hideo (3)  
Iwakuni, Tetsundo (4)  
Kan, Naoto (9)  
Kaneda, Seiichi (5)  
Kato, Koichi (3)  
Matsumoto, Ryu (6)  
Nagatsuma, Akira (3)  
Nishimura, Chinami (2)  
Suematsu, Yoshinori (4)  
Tajima, Kaneme (2)  
Terada, Manabu (2)  
Tsumura, Keisuke (2)

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Tsutsui, Nobutaka (4)

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Yunoki, Michiyoshi (1)

Upper House (9)

Eda, Satsuki (3)  
Fujisue, Kenzo (1)  
Ienishi, Satoru (1)  
Kina, Shokichi (1)  
Madoka, Yoriko (3)  
Ogawa, Toshio (2)  
Okazaki, Tomiko (3)  
Sakurai, Mitsuru (2)  
Tsurunen, Marutei (2)

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¶21. (C) Members of the Maehara Group (25 members)

Lower House (19)

Azumi, Jun (4)  
Edano, Yukio (5)  
Furukawa, Motohisa (4)  
Genba, Koichiro (5)  
Hosono, Goshi (3)  
Izumi, Kenta (2)  
Kitagami, Keiro (1)  
Komiyama, Yoko (3)  
Kondo, Shoichi (4)  
Mabuchi, Sumio (2)  
Maehara, Seiji (5)  
Nagashima, Akihisa (2)  
Ogawa, Junya (1)  
Sengoku, Yoshito (5)  
Tajima, Issei (2)  
Takai, Miho (2)  
Watanabe, Shu (4)  
Yamanoi, Kazunori (3)  
Yokomitsu, Katsuhiko (5)

Upper House (6)

Fukuyama, Tetsuro (2)  
Haku, Shinkun (1)  
Matsui, Koji (2)  
Minezaki, Naoki (3)  
Ogawa, Katsuya (3)  
Ren, Ho (1)

¶22. (C) Members of the Noda group (8 confirmed members)

Lower House (6)

Haraguchi, Kazuhiro (4)  
Ichimura, Koichiro (2)  
Matsumoto, Takeaki (3)  
Noda, Yoshihiko (4)  
Ogushi, Hiroshi (1)  
Takemasa, Koichi (3)

Upper House (2)

Nagahama, Hiroyuki (1)  
Shimba, Kazuya (2)

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¶23. (C) Members of the former Socialist Party group (18 confirmed members)

Lower House (7)

Akamatsu, Hirotaka (6)  
Hachiro, Yoshio (6)  
Hosokawa, Ritsuo (6)  
Ikeda, Motohisa (5)  
Koori, Kazuko (1)  
Sasaki, Takahiro (1)  
Yokomichi, Takahiro (9)

Upper House (11)

Chiba, Keiko (4)  
Gunji, Akira (2)  
Kamimoto, Mieko (2)  
Koshiishi Azuma (2)  
Matsuoka, Toru (1)  
Mizuoka, Shunichi (1)  
Nataniya, Masayoshi (1)  
Sato, Taisuke (2)  
Takashima, Yoshimitsu (2)  
Tani, Hiroyuki (2)  
Yamashita, Yasuo (2)

¶24. (C) Members of the former Democratic Socialist Party group (22 confirmed members)

Lower House (6)

Banno, Yutaka (3)  
Furumoto, Shinichiro (2)  
Kawabata, Tatsuo (7)  
Kodaira, Tadamasa (6)  
Mikazuki, Taizo (2)  
Takagi, Yoshiaki (6)

Upper House (16)

Asao, Keiichiro (2)  
Fujiwara, Masashi (2)  
Goto, Hitoshi (2)  
Hirata, Kenji (3)  
Ikeguchi, Shuji (2)  
Kato, Toshiyuki (1)  
Kobayashi, Masao (1)  
Mitsui, Wakio (3)  
Naoshima, Masayuki (3)  
Ooe, Yasuhido (1)  
Tsuda, Yataro (1)

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Tsuji, Yasuhiro (2)

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Watanabe, Hideo (2)  
Yamane, Ryuji (2)  
Yanada, Minoru (2)  
Yanagisawa, Mitsuyoshi (1)

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